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SALVINI.

THE GLADIATOR.

THE **CHICKERING** **PIANO.**

One Hundred and Twenty-eight First Medals
OVER ALL COMPETITION

Have been awarded for the Superiority of the
Chickering Piano.

The *very highest awards* of medals and decorations ever bestowed upon representatives of our branch of art-industry have been given to us in various parts of the world. We include upon our list :

A First Prize Medal awarded us at the GREAT CRYSTAL PALACE EXHIBITION IN LONDON, 1851.
At Paris in 1867, at the International Exhibition, THE HIGHEST AWARD OVER ALL COMPETITORS, and awarded Only to Chickering & Sons.
The IMPERIAL CROSS OF THE LEGION OF HONOR, and FIRST GOLD MEDAL. This double Recompense placed us at the Head of all competitors.
The FIRST GRAND GOLD MEDAL, and a SPECIAL DIPLOMA OF DISTINCTION at the Exposition in Santiago de Chili, 1875.
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The FIRST MEDAL AND DIPLOMA at the Great Exhibition in Cork, 1883.
FIRST GOLD MEDAL AND DIPLOMA at the Crystal Palace in 1884.
THREE FIRST GOLD MEDALS at Exhibitions in the U. S. during the year 1884.
Making a total of ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHT FIRST MEDALS AND AWARDS.

While respectfully directing the attention of the great musical public to the product of our manufactory, we may be pardoned in giving warm expression to our satisfaction at being able to say that the CHICKERING PIANOS still maintain their distinguished place as the *very best*, that they are *legitimately the STANDARD PIANOS of the world.*

Respectfully,

CHICKERING & SONS.

THE GLADIATOR:

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS,

BY A. SAUMET,

AS PERFORMED BY

SIGNOR SALVINI

AND HIS AMERICAN COMPANY,

UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF

C. A. CHIZZOLA.

NEW YORK:

J. J. LITTLE & CO., PRINTERS,

Nos. 10 to 20 ASTOR PLACE.

1886.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THE GLADIATOR.

ORIGEN.

FLAVIAN.

PRIEST OF JUNO.

OCTAVIUS.

LUCIUS.

A TRIBUNE.

A NEOPHYTE.

FAUSTINA.

NEODAMIA

THE GLADIATOR.

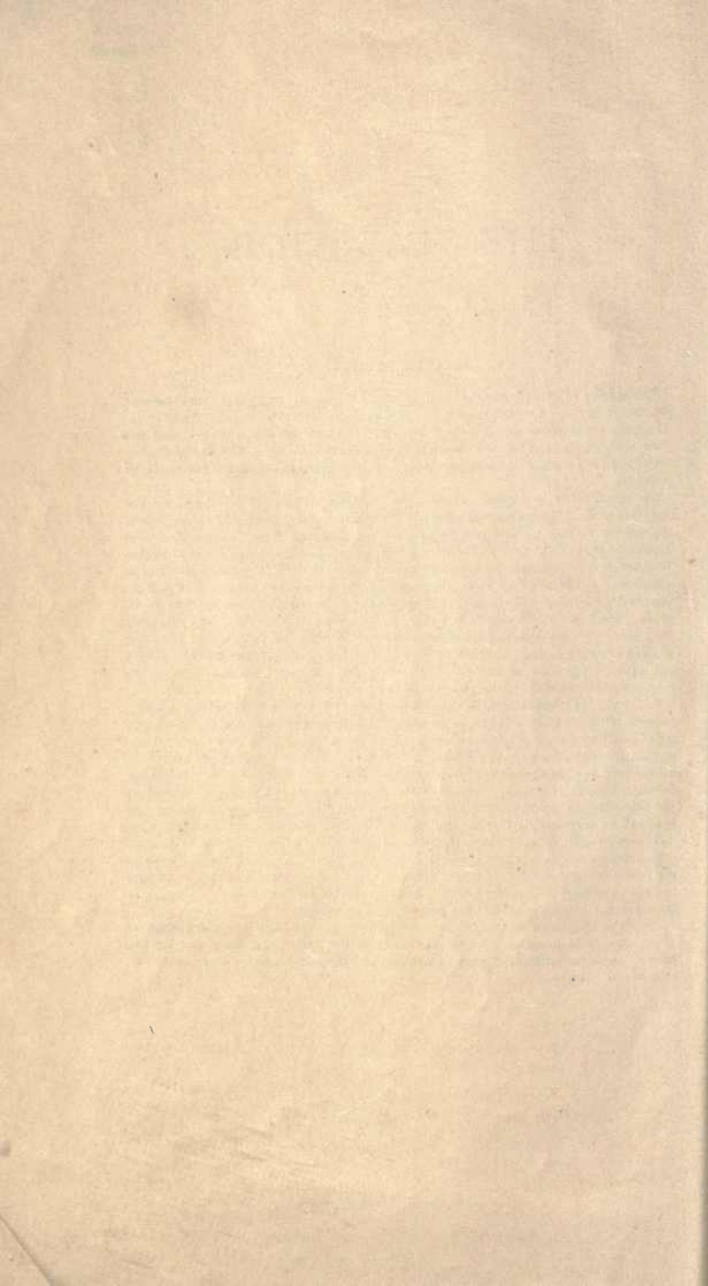
ARGUMENT.

THE motive of this play is the tyranny of the wealthier and patrician classes of old Rome; the grinding oppression under which the humbler citizens lived; licentiousness, superstition and cruelty which characterized the whole people, and the general atmosphere of hate and revenge that pervaded society. The Christians are introduced to heighten the picture, and a young Christian convert is the victim of the play.

THE GLADIATOR is a slave, whose wife has been atrociously murdered by the Empress mother, FAUSTINA. He escapes with his infant daughter. The child is lost. He returns to Rome and visits ORIGEN, a Christian, who lives in the Catacombs. To him he tells the history of his wrongs and announces an intended revolt of slaves. The Empress, with a guard of Lictors, comes to the Catacombs in search of NEODAMIA, a beautiful girl beloved by FLAVIAN, to whom the Empress is herself passionately attached. She misses NEODAMIA, but meets the GLADIATOR. A recognition takes place. The lost daughter's life is bound up by an oracle with that of the young Emperor. The Empress, who has the maternal devotion of a tigress to its cub, promises reward to the GLADIATOR if he can find his child. Meanwhile she orders him to accompany her to FLAVIAN's palace, where NEODAMIA resides. She orders the GLADIATOR to murder the girl, which he refuses to do.

By FAUSTINA's machinations the marriage of FLAVIAN and NEODAMIA is interrupted. ORIGEN, the Christian, is arrested at the temple of Juno, and NEODAMIA, in a fit of enthusiasm, proclaims her own Christianity. Both are thrown into prison, and sentenced to death in the Arena. The GLADIATOR, who has been held as a runaway slave, is appointed executioner of NEODAMIA. In the Arena he recognizes her as his lost child. He vainly appeals to the people's mercy. FAUSTINA, horrified at her son's danger, involved in the girl's approaching death, adjourns the games, and determines to rescue NEODAMIA, and thereby to ward off peril from her son. NEODAMIA and the GLADIATOR are on the point of making their escape under FAUSTINA's protection, when a riot takes place; the Imperial palace is sacked, the Emperor is slain, and the people, under the guidance of the fanatic Priest of Juno, burst into the prison cells of the Amphitheatre. At this supreme moment, to save his daughter from outrage, the GLADIATOR kills her with his own hand.

Thus the iniquities of the rulers recoil on themselves; and the martyrdom of NEODAMIA gives occasion for the conversion of her father and lover, and for the prophetic denunciation of slavery as a curse upon the nations, to be wiped out in the fullness of time.



ACT I.

SCENE I.

The Catacombs of Rome.—A table of stone with a large open book and a skull.

ORIGEN.

ORI. O, Catacombs ! O, temple ! sole asylum
Wherein can freely breathe,
Man, oppressed by the cruel yoke of Rome—
That Rome which grows old in bitter
Strife and discord ; whose spirit,
That once kept whole the people, now from
Her worn out body dies away. O, Catacombs !
Be your gloom redoubled, the fight
Begins—the future of the world
Is concentrated in one thought, nor doubtful
Is the victory. Tyrants and slaves !
At the great man's foot a people laden
With funereal clothes and chains ;
Groans, madness, misery ; and of three thousand
Gods, not a single one for the crisis !
Behold thy world, O Rome ! behold thy heaven !
But our god has risen, and sheds the ray
Of his light upon his human family.
He whom the entombed spirit makes alive
With its breath, for our eyes can make a sun
And freedom for the soul. Yes ! Christ
Our brother,—Christ who was born
On straw, in a manger, sprung
From the common people—but not therefore less
Son to the Omnipotent. In His name
We have fought against a century of blows.
The prisons are with martyrs filled,
The greedy axe gets blunt, in vain
Redoubling its strokes. Alas ! we die
On all sides. O, heaven, when shall be erased
From the world's face the scandal,
“That man—can be man's master?”
When ? Perchance now, perchance in a thousand years
The sacred tree whose genial foliage

Soothes every pain, will not perhaps
 For long ages have spread out
 All its branches ; but finally in its
 Favoring shelter shall rise matured
 The liberty of the world.

SCENE II.

NEOPHYTE and ORIGEN.

NEO. Some slaves
 Are seeking you.
 ORI. I am their protector.
 NEO. Their guide is that Gladiator, of whose
 Victories all Rome used to talk ;
 He has not here been seen these fifteen years.
 ORI. I will move
 Towards them. Wretched slaves. They shall
 Ever have a brother in Origen—to them
 I will speak. The unknown lady
 Introduce meanwhile. Some secret
 To be revealed, has brought her, as she comes
 Into our hiding-place. [Exit Neo

SCENE III.

Enter NEODAMIA and NEOPHYTE.

NEOD. My heart trembles.
 ORI. You are in grief, daughter. Wherefore? The cry
 Of sorrow reaches to us, weak though we be.
 NEOD. And do you console?
 ORI. Our God
 Doth sometimes vouchsafe his healing words by us
 NEOD. One of your sisters seeks
 To throw herself at your feet.
 ORI. Well,
 What shall prevent her?
 NEOD. Fear,
 And—ah, pardon, lord—perhaps remorse
 At her new found joy—

ORI. She is—

NEOD. A Christian!

ORI. Give me then, yourself the confession
Of that trembling soul; and I
Will hear it.

NEOD. You divine, oh father,
Her request! A slave by birth, unknown
Her country or kindred, wherever she
May turn her feet, she must always have been
A stranger and an orphan, if Christ
Had not received her into His family,
Into His divine mansion.

ORI. Proceed.

NEOD. Until to-day, her heart was free and pure
Of other loves; but a Roman youth,
Who yet eternally separated from her,
Appears by rank in life; a
Proud and tender look has turned upon the face
Of that young girl.

ORI. (*Agitated.*) And how?

NEOD. (*Earnestly.*) All in honor,
Not in insult; respective fully
Of her jealous dignity. Master
Of that slave, he seeks to marry her;
But... a Christian... He is not.

ORI. Knows he of what faith
His slave is?

NEOD. He alone in Rome—

ORI. And she,
In her new ties, will she to our worship
Hold faithful?

NEOD. (*Eagerly.*) Always! always!

ORI. Your looks assure me of it;
Then take her back this word
From a priest of the Lord:
She may, without any peril
Accept her good fortune. Ever a present help
Is our religion; severe she
Sometimes may be, inexorable never.
God is not angry at our honest loves.
Daughter, go in peace.

NEOD. O, the ineffable thought!
Flavian, to be happy—
And without sin!

[*Exit*]

SCENE IV

GLADIATOR and Slaves.

ORI. to NEOPH. Admit the slaves.

GLA. (*Looking around.*) Is this your palace?—So much the better!

Here no pomp offends the light
Of our eyes. My friends, remain
In these sepulchral caves. My heart
Is full already of your grievances—
For all I speak alone. By the gods!
Never have I felt so great a need
Of pouring out my wrath!

ORI. Be calm!

GLA. If I lie, may the gods overwhelm me—
See here—these senses of mine at a mere wink,
Fly up in flames. So often
Have I fought the lions, that their roar
Has got into my voice. Excuse me,
Master, excuse me. My name
May be known to you. I am Niger;
I was born in Thrace; but greater and finer far
Is my slave name; in Rome I am
The Gladiator.

ORI. Among us you will bear
A name that I prefer to any,
And most sacred before God.

GLA. What is that?

ORI. Brother.

GLA. The Christians call us brothers?
Then are all the Christians slaves like us?

ORI. No, brother; those fetters which pride
And cruelty invented, fell to pieces
At the cry of the divine victim.
Man the slave of man? oh, heaven, what
Monstrous compact! To God himself
Man is not a slave. God, who keeps the balance
Of the world He made, permits evil,
So that man may be free. So glorious
In His eyes is that great boon
Of liberty, that by it alone
Our souls draw nigh to God.

GLA. Ha! this is talking! Grand! I like
Thy doctrine—I love it, and I feel my breast

Expand, and all my vitals
 Drink in air by torrents ! Thanks, father,
 For thy kindness. I will pay it back—
 Yes, yes ! brother. My return to Rome
 Is not yet known ; I am not wont
 To stave off danger—I have staunch friends
 Just now to serve ; all have sworn
 To be revenged for outrage suffered.
 We will all lay down our chains together,
 Upon the tomb of Rome. All equals,
 All oppressed, we offer our heads
 To the edge of the sword. You don't know
 What it is, to be obliged to cut throats every day ;
 What it is to swim in your own blood,
 When they please to see it ; or like us,
 To amuse the Arena with our dying breath.
 The edict is gone forth.

ORI. I know it all.

GLA. Help us with your hate. Aid the plot
 With your counsel—your great name, and the arm
 Of your Christians will be a help to us.
 We are ready—all ready.

ORI. Other arms
 Are ours ; which make a surer triumph
 To the soul.

GLA. What are they ?

ORI. Prayer and supplication !

GLA. Don't know them ! To avenge our long tried
 Grievances, there is not blood enough ;
 And thou offerest tears ?

ORI. As if there were need
 Of blood ; you, by the brazen foot
 Downtrodden, look upon the blood
 Of God, which drops from the Cross.

GLA. Let Him

Fulfil our vengeance, and I will worship Him.

ORI. Brother ! who worships this, our God,
 Forgoes all vengeance.

GLA. What say you ?—Our
 Horrible torments....

ORI. And what are they to men
 Who look upon them with calm aspect ?

GLA. Ah ! but thou hast not understood me, priest
 I am a slave, without a home,

A family, or country ; humbled,
Proscribed, vagabond ; my life worse than a dog's
Tied by a chain, which in some remote
Corner can bite the groom
That lashes him, and vainly
Growling, can work off his rage. The brand
Of infamy is stamped upon my brow,
Not on my arms or feet, but here upon the brow,
So that the master's mark in the eyes
Of all the world may do dishonor to
The human being all it can. Oh, what
Store of hate is hidden in this breast,
What cries, what pants for vengeance !
My fate, the Amphitheatre, and Rome
I curse eternally, and insulting,
Spurn this stepmother earth,
That brings forth chains for me ! I insult
And curse that sun, which o'er all the world
Sends forth his light, making more grievous
The air of bondage. To our gods,
Tyrants that I never see,
I offer defiance as to a fight impossible ;
I a dull athlete ; and vainly on the air
I waste the treasures of my fury.
Revenge misleads me, sweat runs down, my arms
I open wide in the fierce desire
To crush . . . the universe.

Trembling of her babe. Ah ! would she had
 Never told it—my hopeful
 Pledge of warm enduring love !
 But with envious fury Faustina burned ;
 And on my wife she looked askance. One day
 While I was dreaming of a happy future,
 There came from the palace depths a cry—
 A wailing, fearful cry—too well the voice
 To me was known—I trembling run.
 Ha ! what horror ! Upon a bed of iron,
 Pale, naked—my companion lay
 On her right side. With dagger in her hand
 A sorceress was saying, “ Faustina, you
 “ Might be a mother, but because the infernals
 “ Have the power obtained, we must have
 “ An unborn child, from its mother’s
 “ Womb untimely taken.
 “ This child, which my art requires
 “ For its philters, part of its life
 “ To your son shall give. Fate to both,
 “ Whether they be divided or conjoined,
 “ Will equal make their length of years.”
 I, with a groan horribly prolonged,
 Interrupted the monster. But the wretch’s
 Dagger did not flinch—“ What do I see ! a man ! ”
 Faustina cried—“ It is her husband ! Let him
 “ Stand opposite and be spectator.”
 With iron bonds so tightly drawn
 That they drew the blood, her Nubian
 Cutthroats bound me to a pillar,
 Which in my struggles
 Fell upon my head, but did not break
 My chain ; and then I saw the crime completed—
 I saw the victim quiver
 Beneath the knife. There was one long
 Mother’s shriek—the last. The heavens did
 Not fall ; they did not fall, and dost thou talk of God ?
 And your child ?

ORI.
 G. L. A.

The mother was no more :
 Faustina’s contempt spared the father’s
 Life. Night came,
 And, torch in hand, I made
 My way to the accursed palace.
 I gave it to the flames, and from among the ruins,

By hidden ways—with the child, a daughter,
 Afar I fled. I saved her
 In the desert, in Egypt. I have not told
 Half my sufferings; but nothing more
 Is worth the telling.—Now you know what we are;
 You understand the mortal injuries
 That men have done me. Is it just
 That I wish to exterminate them? Is it
 Not their due?

ORI. Un'less you pardon them.
 Mercy is heaven-created
 In our hearts. Olympus thundered—
 Calvary pardons. God chose
 To die upon the cross, whence as from on high,
 He might extend his arms to all in pity.
 GLA. Pardon them! I pardon? Madness.
 ORI. With just such words ever commences
 The work of faith.

SCENE V.

NEOPHYTE and same.

NEO. It is time to
 Part. Lictors I have seen
 Who violate this gloom that now protects us,
 They penetrate the tombs. To execute
 Some fatal order they are surely come.
 They announce the Empress.
 GLA. Ye gods!
 Faustina?
 ORI. Come, without fear follow me!
 Many are the secret hiding places, known
 To me only. (*Exeunt ORI., NEO. and slaves.*)
 GLA. I remain. (*Hides behind a pillar.*)

SCENE VI

FAUSTINA, ALBINO, Lictors.

FAU. 'Tben 'tis truth
 You tell me, Tribune. My enemy!
 My rival came....
 ALB. Here.

- FAU. But Christian
Is not Neodamia. Are you not mistaken?
- ALB. He cannot be mistaken who has given
All his mind to serve you. But by favor
Of these gloomy labyrinths
She has escaped our search.
- FAU. And you
Have not avenged me? In your hand
My sword is placed. You cannot prevent
This marriage that offends me. One of them
Must die. Too much, Albino, you do delay
My anger. I shall before long become
The Empire's byword. My wish
Is known to Rome. My rank, my name,
I have forgot for Flavian.—I, the mother—
I—mother of the Cæsar—they make sport
Of my anger. Do not the fools perceive
In my tears, their death?
In their insensate love they tender me
A poison draught—shall I not return to them
The bitter cup? We have hearers.
- ALB. No—
- FAU. Yes! see—
Is not that a man there?
- ALB. Lictors, seize him.

SCENE VII.

- GLADIATOR and SAME.
To the Empress I will myself
- GLA. Advance. (In the depths of my heart,
Oh hate, keep still, until shall come
The auspicious moment.) I am, I am—
- FAU. I know you.
- GLA. Faustina, guilt
Keeps memory clear. What blood
You needed to write my history—
Over my heart, my chains,
My whole life, it has overflowed.—Past
Are fifteen years, but still 'tis red.
- FAU. Slave, to heed thy anger fits me not,
Where is thy daughter?

GLA. Where is
Her mother? What hast thou done with her?

FAU. Away!
What wrong was done? The sorceress
Commanded; I obeyed.

GLA. Thou obey! Faustina!

FAU. Yes: it was cruel—

GLA. Indeed, was it so!

FAU. After that day
All went ill with me. You may be glad,
However, that in my heart I seem
To be somewhat sorry. The oracle
Was not a liar: I am a mother.
In his three lustres my boy rejoices—
But his father poisoned, and the rebellion—

GLA. Slave as I am, 'twas not in vain, then, that
I cursed thee.

FAU. Enough!

GLA. Given up
By men to anguish, I have yet
Some power.

FAU. What the gods give thee—

GLA. And you believe in the gods; and offer them
As best sacrifice....

FAU. To-day I claim
Thy daughter. Thou art hostage for her;
Know you under what star she is born?
Know you that Cæsar has one fate with her?
That on your daughter the Gods regards are bent,
And sister to the Cæsar
They assign her.

GLA. Brotherhood Divine!
Cæsar lives, she lives! Meanwhile
She's lost ...to me!

FAU. Lost?

GLA. Stolen....

FAU. She may be restored.

GLA. Daughter! My daughter!
Clasped in my arms I took her away,
Far away to the banks
Of Nile! and there from every human eye
Concealed I kept her. She slept
Upon my breast by night, and at the dawn we went
To earn our bread. At set of sun

To my blessed cavern home one day
 I came—sought everywhere—
 It was empty—she was carried away !
 Next after thee, this was my greatest grief.—

FAU. And was there no trace ?

GLA. Long time

I held Osiris' priests suspect ;
 They have the rule in Egypt ; I followed
 On their tracks ; but finally,
 After three lustres of vain fury,
 My hands have fallen, and I now despair.

FAU. Thou hast not sought her well. Hear me, slave !
 Dost thou not fear my wrath,
 Thus putting at guilty risk the days
 Of our all highest Imperator ?

GLA. What matters

Your Imperator in my love ?

FAU. Be mindful.

Thou hast lost her, and find her again thou canst,
 Beyond all doubt.

GLA. Oh ! if I could !

FAU. Well, then,

Go ! Recross the sea. Take what gold
 Thou wilt, my victors, and four
 Of my galleys.—When found, how
 Wouldst thou recognize her ?

GLA. From the day

She first saw light, she has a mark upon her shoulder.
 Yes, that very blade that took the
 Mother's life—

FAU. Ha ! I remember

When I checked the current of her blood—

GLA. Thyself !

FAU. Enough, enough ! Something too much
 Of thy laments. In everlasting hate
 We should each other abhor, were we not joined
 By this tie of offspring. Thus,
 I thy child restore.—Thy arm,
 If thou succeed shall serve Cæsar,
 And thou shalt be free.

GLA. Free !

FAU. And rich,

And great—in Rome, or wherever else you please.

GLA. Then like others I shall become a man !

FAU. Thou shalt have titles and property.—

GLA. And slaves--

Their bonds to loose ?

FAU. And now depart !

Go, quick ! on duty. Help

From Africa's Pro-Consul thou shalt have—

Temples and palaces carefully explore.

First, however, I would have thy service

For a single day.

GLA. So suddenly—

FAU. I will have thee secretly into Flavian's

Mansion find an entrance. The garden

Keys I keep myself. Thou canst have

Trusty escort. Destiny has

Brought thee hither for this purpose ;

But let no one come upon thy traces.

GLA. Make use

Of my blade against him. I have long time sworn

Hatred and death, to every head

That rises above its fellows. Dost thou seek

Vengeance on Flavian ?

FAU. No ; follow me !

GLA. I follow,

(She goes off.)

Expecting from heaven the happy day,

When on thy own guilty head I shall have....vengeance !

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Gardens on the Tiber. Statues—Plants—Guests on couches of bronze and mother of pearl inlaid with gold and tortoise shell. A lapis lazuli table with fruits and goblets. Boys bearing alabaster or silver jars serve the guests.

FLAVIAN, OCTAVIUS, LUCIUS.

OCT. May the gods keep thy gardens
Safe from Polar winds ! They excel
Agenor's boasted gardens, by the shade
They give us. Bring me flowers !
How I like flowers ! Thou shouldst not quite despoil
Thy porphyry vases to-day
Deiphya, for us.

FLA. This is a solemn day ;
More so than you think. I summon you
As witnesses, my dear friends, to a marriage
That will change my life for ever.

LUC. Is it a jest ?

FLA. It is no jest.

OCT. What woman so rash that dares
To press thy hand ? Aglaë ? Many a time
I shall join the train of her thousand lovers.

LUC. Stella ? In luxury will be buried
Thy every duty.

OCT. Really I believe
It is that blond girl, Epicharis.

LUC. Thou'rt wrong ;
'Tis Julia keeps him in her service.

OCT. Is it true ?

The Empress ?

FLA. (*Angrily.*) No ! Among my own slaves
There is one whom I shall make
Free before you all.

ALL. How ?—what ?—

FLA. Love waits on her perfect virtue !
To her matchless beauty I have offered

Given, all my heart. Free am I only
 Since that day I loved her ! Already full
 Of another flame, my soul had been subject
 To my senses. Now, not the madness
 Of deceptive passion, nor yet the snares
 Of joys, on which follows quick regret—
 Joys that are but lamps to make more black
 The gloom of vice. A love more true,
 A love more beautiful in glory . . . is this
 which Neodamia first excited in my heart ;
 That purest countenance, where sadness
 Peeps through veiled modesty, shines for me
 A star unseen by all the outer world.
 The goddess Vesta has come down to make her shrine
 Within my doors.

OCT. Is he turned Nazarene ?
 LUC. Not he ! He is nothing but a—lover.
 FLA. You
 Shall be my witnesses, for I will make
 My slave my wife. Be not misers
 Of a friend's indulgence.
 OCT. Dost thou know
 Her ? my friend—
 LUC. Not I !
 OCT. Nor I !

SCENE II

NEODAMIA and Slaves, *crowned with roses*.

FLA. Neodamia !
 ALL. How beautiful she is.
 FLA. Draw near ; to-day the feast
 Without you, would not be : thenceforth
 More lasting be its joys
 In your approval.
 NEOD. My lord.
 FLA. (*Introducing her.*) The better part
 Of my not many friends.
 OCT. Together bound
 By sacred vows.
 FLA. Sacred indeed.

- LUC. As those which now are made at your feet.
 OCT With us the ties of friendship bind like oaths.
 NEO. Friendship, I have heard
 Binds love itself more closely ; and so I think.
 To-day I am assured.
- FLA. And Flavian
 Never will deny what she says,
 With such a pretty speech.
- LUC. Truly
 Happy art thou.
- FLA. Neodamia, your
 Lord would make you one request !
- NEO. I attend.
- FLA. He wishes now to see you at his feet—
 Command to-morrow. Obey to-day.
(She kneels before him.)
- There is not in all my Tiberine garden
 A branch so sacred which can make thee
 Free ; as now my noble sword
 Thus makes thee free. *(Touches her forehead with sword.)*
 Rise up :
 The shame of slavery is wiped away :
 Henceforth be free.
- NEO. Your hand
 I bless.
- OCT. She knelt a servant
 And she rises queen.
- FLA. Now you can
 Fly from me, if so you wish : bonds
 And masters are no more.
- NEOD. Do you think—
 You ... Flavian ?
- FLA. No, indeed—I lose a slave,
 I find a wife.
- LUC. Friend ! Rome
 'Will take exception to this wedding.
- OCT. *(Aside.)* Much more,
 The Empress.
- FLA. Wherefore, all Rome
 I ask as guests at my nuptials.
- NEOD. I expect you
 To-morrow at the altar.
- FLA. In Juno's Temple ?

- OCT. If our eyes be kept on you
But little incense will the goddess get.
- NEOD. The incense
Of this heart other gods shall have.
- LUC. Receive our farewell.
- FLA. Friends, adieu! (*Ex. OCT. and LUC.*)
- NEOD. My Flavian—my heart did tremble
When I named the altar.
- FLA. My little girl!
- NEOD. It sounded blasphemous.
- FLA. What matters
The altar's name?
- NEOD. Oh say not so,
To-morrow I will follow thee; another day
Thou wilt follow thy faithful friend
In the Christian's church.
- FLA. Your pleasure
Shall be done.
- NEOD. Your sacred word
Origen shall see. By his binding words
We will be worthily united.
- FLA. Hide,
Oh hide this fearful secret,
Darling mine!
- NEOD. I have promised; and I will.
- FLA. The name of Christ will else be mortal to thee;
Thy death is mine. The hour
Is near when the Emperor expects me
For important business.
- NEOD. To instantly return—
- FLA. I return
After a little to thy feet
- NEOD. When Flavian
Leaves me, with him it seems that all my
Happiness takes flight. Pardon
My weakness. Adieu. (*Ex. FLA.*)
- Happy?
- How happy I am. Why, then, tremble?
And in my secret soul feel
Thus agitated!
- I feel
A need to be alone, with my own
Angel. Oh! let him spread his wings
O'er my head and guard me.—Oh, I will

Read with him in this holy book.
 This is the law of the Lord, the law
 Of a new age.—Incline, ye branches,
 Make your shade more dense. ye gardens
 Of my Flavian, keep peace and silence
 About my footsteps. This is the
 Saviour's law.

(Retires.)

SCENE III.

FAUSTINA and GLADIATOR.

(During NEODAMIA'S speech, they observe her.)

FAU. I am not mistaken. I see
 With my own eyes. The girl is pretty.
 Perhaps I thought—— I am not cruel.

GLA. You?

FAU. Flavian, I would rescue from dishonor.
 He is detained just now by Gordian
 Through my device; I have letters—I wish
 To act with mercy, that the unhappy one—
 My feeble rival,—may open her eyes
 On her own folly. If my proofs
 Should be in vain, here is a dagger.—Strike
 When in my eyes thou readest death.

GLA. I obey.

FAU. It is well. What innocence
 She bears upon her face.

(GLADIATOR retires, but keeps within sight.)

SCENE IV.

NEODAMIA and same.

NEOD. The Lord is here,
 He has heard my prayer.

FAU. Girl!

NEOD. *(Hiding roll in her garments.)*

Ah, my God! Am I ashamed of thee? Excuse me,
 Lady. I am Ne damia, who are you?

FAU. A friend till now unknown.
 But on my soul, well am I known
 To your husband.

- NEOD. What say you? As yet
Is Flavian not my husband: but will be
To-morrow.
- FAU. To-morrow? To your
Young lover I will speak, then.
- NEOD. Oh! my
Lord call him rather.
- FAU. This name
Forget forever; it is a sad one
To remember.
- NEOD. Of all my memories
There is not one which can humiliate me.
- FAU. Very happy are you then.
- NEOD. Oh, God! Happy!
- FAU. Only in hearing you can I understand. So young,
So beautiful.... Come, I love you.
- NEOD. You love me? You?
- FAU. Yes, really!
I know not wherefore, but the love I bear
To Flavian, on his beloved,
All falls back. (Dangerous love
For thy young life.)
- NEOD. Beloved indeed
Is Flavian in Rome, and me who am
His special joy, perhaps they will love
For his sake.
- FAU. Ah, so. His special joy—his—
Who would be but for you? They say
He sets you before the noblest dame
In Rome; they say, but it is late
To repeat it; for at your feet
Doubtless he has made his boast.
- NEOD. No! lady! And I, when such a heart
Is given me—how could I care
For that he leaves behind.
- FAU. Oh my child,
And so you are not jealous; I see it.
- NEOD. I jealous! of him!
- FAU. (What triumph
In that look.) Who could ever
With a single word have subdued that heart,
Rebel against love, excepting you
So young, and so—beautiful? My child,
Are you in your sixteenth year?

NEOD. In my sixteenth.

FAU. Oh, charming age;
 Ah, adorable youth! The gods
 Have no better gift for a bride—
 A promised bride! Your glorious marriage
 Occupies my thought—I speak of it
 All day, and dream all night. In Rome
 They talk of nothing else; in Rome
 You are admired; in Rome again
 You are blamed and envied—and pitied!

NEOD. Who should pity me?

FAU. Yourself.

NEOD. ' ?

FAU. Yes; yourself;
 Should pity yourself. And I when looking
 On that face serene, those lips
 Of rose, those eyes, and godlike hair,
 Most lovely maid—much in my heart's
 Depths oppresses me—pity.
 Flavian is fickle, and you are
 So tender. Flavian may,
 After incense offered, recklessly
 Throw down his idol.

NEOD. This speech—

FAU. In pain all inexperienced
 Is your youthful heart: but admit
 That all is ready for this festivity,
 And weigh with me the value
 Of his conquest. Flavian—
 I know him well. Thou knowest him not yet.
 Thou art his wife—I will guide thy steps.
 Before, in this way, before three days
 Are past, no more, thou shalt see the end
 Of his constancy. Thou seest not,
 Thou a weak girl, to whom but yesterday
 He gave his heart, that thou canst not
 Make him proud—in thy passion.

NEOD. Alas! this humble passion he holds dear,
 He is jealous of it, selecting me when
 He might make his choice of many.

FAU. You force me—you yourself.—All Rome
 Is well informed of his perfidious loves.
 Read this letter, and then answer.
 See, written yesterday. It is his hand.

- NEOD. Flavian! oh woe! Thy sister,
Thy betrothed, thy own.
So deceived! Thou!
- FAU. No promise
Is held sacred in his eyes.
- NEOD. Then am I
Lost.
- FAU. No.
- NEOD. Desperate! My God,
What shall I do?
- FAU. Fly at all costs: it is needful
To save yourself from this shame
And contempt.
- NEOD. Fly!
- FAU. Yes, from Rome.
Come—
- NEOD. Fly!
- FAU. At all cost. I am
Powerful, Neodamia, and I am your
True, loyal friend.
- NEOD. Ah, you give me terror!
- FAU. My arms are open to thee. The heart
In time gets hardened against the ills
We all must suffer. Fly from Rome!
- NEOD. Ah, Flavian!
- FAU. Flee from his yoke,
This air is mortal to thee. At every step
A snare may catch thee, at every step
A barrier hem thee in. And there above all
Is thy rival? Ah, thou knowest nothing?
Thy rival—
- NEOD. Unknown to me have ever been
The ways of sin—
- FAU. Thou art a victim,
A needful victim to the pride
Of the offended lady. It needs it must be;—
That thou give way! Oh, foolish girl! And yet
I open wide my arms again.
- NEOD. Now pitiful,
Now threatening, you who are the safeguard
Of my innocence, you who speak
Of mercy while bringing me death—
Who are you?

- FAU. I am thy fate,
Thy judge. I am at this instant
Thy preserver : miserable, tremble
When at last I turn thy Empress.
- NEOD. Great Cæsar's mother ?
- FAU. And thy rival !
- NEOD. Great Heaven !
- FAU. Now understand to what dangers
Thy head is here exposed. Understand
If insulted I should be by thy refusal,
What value in my eyes
Had the blood of a paltry slave—
Of a slave who would be hunted o and fro
And trampled under foot : whom none
On earth would dare receive. The kings of the East
Slaughter them by thousands, and for sole cause,
That Heaven may send upon their eyelids
A quiet sleep. Once again
And for the last time I offer thee
My friendship. Fly—Faustina's pity
Lasts but for a moment—
Fly.
- NEOD. Flavian must come. I stay
- FAU. Under the roof of this unfaithful lover
A betrayer.
- NEOD. Of my Lord.
- FAU. To save thee
I was willing—Niger thou seest—
- GLA. I see !
- FAU. To him I leave thee—Adieu. (Exit.)
- NEOD. (*Falling on a marble seat.*) Rise. Be brave,
My soul ! But not so easily arises
The flower crushed and trodden under foot—
Flavian. Flavian—Jealous
Exceedingly is Heaven, and to punish me
Has chosen out my husband. Pain
And sorrow everywhere ; and infamy.
- GLA. (*After looking around stands before her.*)
Now we are alone !
- NEOD. And then ?
- GLA. Poor child ! And I about—
And can you forgive me now for ever ?
- NEOD. Forgive ?

- GLA. She knows not. I have orders
To slay you, but your voice.
And looks and tears,—
- NEOD. My heart
Has no more tears : take my blood,
That he may find me dead at his return.
I am so wholly wretched.
- GLA. No you are not.
She who armed my hand, chose
To torture your heart before my hand
Should slay you. I have the steel,
She the words.
- NEOD. She lied ?
Tell me she lied.
- GLA. Ah, how she makes me suffer !
- NEOD. You will not kill me now ; oh, kill me not !
I do not wish to die. I ask your mercy ;
At your feet.
- GLA. No to my heart that beats,
Arise—
- NEOD. But that letter ?
- GLA. Long ago
’Twas written—Long ago—
- NEOD. Then he
Loves me still ?
- GLA. He loves thee ; this steel
That hung over thy head is the proof.
- NEOD. Ah, my delight.
- GLA. Poor little one.
- NEOD. Flavian is true. Why then do you
Pity me ?
- GLA. Thy rival,
Cruel, great and powerful,
Is in anger ; Flavian loved her once,
And from her blows to save thy head,
We need a God.
- NEOD. My own God.
- GLA. This Empress frightens me ;
I am afraid of her. I too am a slave.
- NEOD. Your bonds shall be broken, and
Flavian shall do it.
- GLA. My bonds
Are precious in my eyes become. By crime
I could have broken them ; let them stay,

Sublimest badge of honor on my arms.
 Flavian—oh, imprudent ! close
 Your eyes in danger. His glorious
 Alliance, alone can be our shield
 And buckler. Let us return
 Within his palace.

NEOD.

May heaven protect you.

GLA.

Meanwhile the Gladiator is your protector.

END OF ACT II

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Temple of Juno. Statues of Jupiter and Juno.

GLADIATOR and FLAVIAN.

FLA. Faustina gave you this weapon that in
Neodamia's bosom you should plunge it.

GLA. She gave it me.

Amid the marriage preparations, a
Secret dagger was prepared for that poor child.
I bring down on my head all Faustina's anger,
But think not of me! my heart, my hand,
Are at your disposal.

FLA. My Neodamia! In the
Imminent peril, I resigned at once
All dignities with which the emperor
Had invested me. Our marriage is hastened
By a day, and secrecy shall protect the rite.
Faustina will not dare
Profane these walls. The priests
Of Juno have meanwhile the charge
Of my affianced, and are well informed
Of my design.

GLA. These sacred walls
Give no relief to my alarm. Faustina—
You know her not as I do, you have not
Seen that woman's look
When flames of vengeance sweep over
Her fierce soul! Open your eyes
And keep them upon your bride
In the hour of danger.

SCENE II.

A TRIBUNE, Lictors and same.

FLA. What do you
Require, Tribune?

- TRI. A Thracian slave.
 GLA. Here I am.
 TRI. In Rome a spectacle is preparing
 For to-morrow, and you are expected
 In our amphitheatre.
 GLA. Good. To-morrow
 I will come, Tribune—art thou content?
 TRI. Not at all.
 GLA. No?
 TRI. Thou must follow now
 FLA. His security
 I will be.
 TRI. Excuse me.
 FLA. What hast thou to fear?
 TRI. My orders are precise, I may not
 Disobey them.
 GLA. To-morrow—
 TRI. The prayer is vain.
 From the Roman people's pleasures these fifteen years,
 Flight has withdrawn you.
 GLA. My flight
 Was all legitimate. By a crime
 Faustina broke my bonds.
 TRI. It is of no use.
 FLA. Obey.
 TRI. Follow me—
 GLA. In this temple
 There is a right of asylum.
 TRI. How?
 GLA. I will not come!
 At the foot of Jove I wait you, and defy you!
 TRI. Right of asylum the temple even of Jove
 Has not for slaves.
 FLA. This is the law.
 GLA. Oh, Jove! oh, king of gods! for the unhappy
 Hast thou then no altar? They persecute me
 Even on thy threshold! Before the Gods
 Is equality denied—are not mortals
 All one family? O, Jove! O, Jove!
 By their offences men accuse
 Thy divinity. To misfortune
 Even prayer is denied. In heaven, as on
 Earth, I proscribed am. My chains
 Divide me even from thee. Infamous laws!

My chains which rather ought
To bring me near to thee. *(Strikes the status.)*

God who art
Already near to falling, god of stone,
Who canst not hear, crush me if you
Cannot defend me, make me free
With death !

TRI. The circus waits.
GLA. Let's go. Adieu. Better the lion and tiger
Than such a divinity. *(Exit.)*

FLA. The first essay is this
Of the strife that wicked woman wages.
I know Faustina's love ! The weapon
In the slave's hand ? and now she punishes him
For his noble refusal. The slave
Shall be free, I swear it.—'Tis she, 'tis she,

SCENE III.

FAUSTINA.

FAU. Answer Flavian. In your own hands
Do you hold the issue of your fate.
Whence comes it that you dare lay down
Your titles and your offices, despoil yourself
Of all your dignity, without asking from me
Or from my son, permission ?
I speak not now of my past gifts,
Nor of honors at which Rome has stood amazed.
In Gordian's name you are now commanded
By his mother, that without delay, you
Do assume the honors and the power,
As Proconsul of Gaul. Besides, and herein I yield
To reasons of state, it is the firm wish
Of the entire Senate—I still hesitate—
They wish that from the illustrious names of Rome,
I choose myself a—husband, and that the weight
Of government, too heavy for my son,
Be divided in two parts. Now this election,
You see it well, is no light task,
A husband for me, whose help the Emperor
Invokes, must be great, illustrious and
By Romans honored. My son
As a sacred trust I place

In his hands : and in his virtue
Lies our every future hope.
Your advice, O Flavian, I await :
Speak ! I command you.

FLA. What! you ask
Advice from me? You? I feel the value
Of this distinguished honor.

FAU. At what preferment
Can Flavian be surprised? And this
Is not the greatest, if he bear in mind
Our kindness and his own glory.
It is not the greatest, if he do not forget
The ties, the solemn ties,
That bind him to the throne. Immense imprudence
Might it be in him, to throw aside the burthen
Of such duty. On the loftiest heights
Of greatness, we take but one step backward
And fall into an abyss.—Now speak :
Say what to-day inspires in you the love—
Of Rome.

FLA. A double Emperor would be
The ruin of the Empire.

FAU. Does Flavian fully
Understand my wishes? Does he not —
Does he not make error in the advice requested?
Looked he so high that he could read the name
I destine to protect the Empire.

FLA. The sovereign power should be retained
By Cæsar only.

FAU. Are the obstacles such
That they are insuperable?—A refusal
With smiles of derision? How comes
The Empress in this temple? Why comes
She to insult the majesty of the Immortals
With her bold brow? Hear.—By this
Love my shame, on the throne
Of the Cæsars, in this love
Thou mayst reign.

FLA. Lord of my allegiance
I hold your son.

FAU. If thou hast listened to yonder slave,
Dost thou not tremble? By what I dared
To punish a rival, judge what I can do
To succeed. The pomp and ceremony

Thou hast come here to arrange for her,
 Knowst thou by what torches I could illumine her?
 Knowst thou not that this altar whither thy
 Offence drags her may change to an altar
 Of sacrifice? And that the gods propitiated
 For this marriage, may call for blood,
 If I make them speak? I know your fame,
 I know how dear your name is held
 Among the Prætorians, and I know
 The power that gives you victory. Ruined
 Thou mayst drag me down in thy fall.
 The lightning I bring down may burn
 Up myself, I know it: but my fall
 Would be ruin—
 Of the empire. First of all, my rival
 Shall descend to the tomb. For one instant
 I shall triumph. Shatter a whole empire
 For a slave!! To thee I bend
 From the height of the throne. Throw
 Away a crown for her!—Forget your
 Vows to me, until that hour
 When, opening your eyes, you recognize
 The awful consequences. Thou hast
 Worked thy own ruin, and it is complete
 This very day. Wailing and sorrow
 For the wedlock done in Rome.

(*Exit.*)

FLA. Monster go—Of thy rage the results
 I will not await—For the first time
 I have this day felt fear for her. We will fly
 Into exile—To our love
 Gallia shall be the safe asylum. Who comes?
 (*Wedding procession.*)

SCENE IV.

NEODAMIA, PRIEST of JUNO.

FLA. Neodamia!

PRIEST. Before immortal ties
 Unite two loving hearts in one destiny,
 Let us invoke the gods who are protectors.

Of hymen—great Juno and Jove
 Tutelars, with those from whom eternal
 Rome derives her name. Before the sacred statues
 Let the holy fire— *(Noise without.)*

What profane

Uproar disturbs the asylum of the Gods.

FLA. Heaven—

PRIEST. The populace in riot advances—

FLA. Faustina!

NEOD. Flavian—

SCENE V.

A TRIBUNE.

TRIB. O priest

Our deities are insulted : before these

Very buildings, a vile Nazarene

Blasphemes.

PRIEST. A Christian! A Christian!

TRIB. He curses our feasts. My

Lictors have him, and bring him to

Your hands.

PRIEST. His brutal madness

I will confound, Tribune.

FLA. Finish instantly

The rites commenced.

PRIEST. Your marriage

Can I bless on outraged altars

Whence Jove still unavenged . . . ks down?

When with impious words the Nazarene—

TRIB. Let him sacrifice or die—

FLAV. O my beloved,

Let us retire.

SCENE VI.

ORIGEN in chains, crowd.

TRIB. Great priest

We transfer to thy avenging God

This sacrilegious Christian.

NEOD. Origen!

FLA. Let us go!

NEOD. O remain, my Flavian.

- PRIEST. They charge
That to-day you have dared to threaten
With your looks this temple. Is it true?
- ORI. Would
The walls fall if I looked at them?
- PRIEST. Pride
Inspires these sacrilegious words.
- ORI. Pride is a virtue with thy creed.
- PRIEST. See there they bow ; do thou too bow
The head.
- ORI. Under the sword—it is ready.
- PRIEST. Down in the dust—and worship.
- ORI. Ah ! of dust
Indeed thy gods are made—I do not worship !
- PRIEST. Dost thou presume thus far in madness
Which to the vulgar seems austerity, to make light
Of earth, the benefice of the gods.
- ORI. This obscene fraternity of gods,
Fills your vast temples with people
That destroy each other ; profaned
With unlawful incense, your Olympus
Has already crumbled under the enormous mass
Of crime that oppresses this earth.
- PRIEST. If it could crumble, on the head
Of your god it would crumble. Beneath the foot
Mine shall crush him—The day begins,
When thy Christians shall be swept away.
- NEOD. Oh Heaven.
- FLAV. (*Aside.*) Be silent.
- ORI. The greatest gain—
For us is death. Our bodies
Burn, our bones disperse and to your
Executioner give rest,
With all your array of lions. For
As after a day of fatigue the sense
Gives way to sleep ; when it is time to die
The Christian is ready in a moment.
At Thebes, in Asia, in the desert, here
In the dungeon, everywhere the palm
Of death puts forth its flowers : wherever
The seed of martyrdom falls,
It roots, and though death strike us
It raises up the world.—Every Christian
In this glorious race pants

Fervidly, and borrowing help
From death, he runs to victory

PRIEST. Let him be dragged—

NEOD Stop—The funeral palms

Which are made ready for him, ~~see them~~

Also for his brethren. The scanda:

Of a bliss without a risk

They ask not: and for the crown ~~in answer~~

They lift their heads.

FLA Oh gods!

ORI What sayst thou?

TRIB. And makest thou common cause with him?

PRIEST. Oh lady, why defend him?

NEOD. I am a Christian.

FLA. Neodamia!

TRI. Oh, fearful crime!

ORI Oh, glorious faith!

It is well—I recognize you.

FLA I defend her!

To free her from thy calumny

My love surrounds her.

ORI If thou lov'st her

Truly, Roman, leave her

Her crown.

PRIEST. Thy crown

Is death.

FLA What hast thou done?

NEOD. My duty.

ORI Take thy place at my side.

FLA Oh, rash one.

NEOD. At thy side I see an angel.

PRIEST. Oh, deluded girl!

FLA Sacred

Is the Roman citizen's family:

She is my wife.

TRI Incomplete

Was this odious marriage.

FLA To the altars

Of our deities, before you, did she not come

By herself? even as I came here

This day to this temple?

PRIEST. Most true,

She did so come.

- FLA. Do you hear?
 NEOD. Flavian!
 FLA. She is prey
 To some horrible, evil influence, 'tis sure.
 It is the force of spells.
 PRIEST. He says the truth.
 O maiden—succumb to the gods—
 Be free.
 FLA. Thou wilt not quit
 My bosom to embrace death :—
 Thou lovest me
 NEOD. Flavian!
 FLA. Love me—O potent
 Cry. How sublime love makes the soul !
 A word from thy lips, one only,
 Conquers them all. Ah ! pronounce it, dear,
 Pronounce it. Let our marriage be complete—
 Sacrifice—for me, only for me.
 NEOD. Great God,
 What ecstasy !
 FLA. Of love ! There is the altar
 Of our marriage—come, I guide thy heart.
 Come, my hand leads thee.
 PRIEST. She advances,
 Drawn to the altar by her beloved spouse.
 ORL. Her heavenly spouse, to the glorious altar
 Of martyrdom calls her !
 FLA. Come, oh come !
 NEOD. I love thee—where am I ?
 FLA. Before the altar.
 NEOD. Before the altar ! oh horror ! I extinguish
 (*Overturns the incense tripod.*)
 The incense ; I will meet thee in Heaven.
 ALL. Sacrilege.
 PRIEST. Death and the circus for the Christians !
 ORL. The circus when the martyr falls
 Is the road to Heaven. Let her follow me.
 PRIEST. Lictors !—
 FLA. Thy fury—
 PRIEST. The circus awaits them.
 FLA. Without arms ? Over my body then—
 NEOD. Adieu.
 FLA. Never ! never !

PRIEST.

Separate them.

FLA

Monster!

NEON

I!

lost a husband.

OEL

God will restore thee

I

ful, redeemed in Heaven.

END OF ACT III

ACT IV.

The Amphitheatre. The Imperial Balcony. The Priests' place.

FAUSTINA, the PRIEST OF JUNO, GLADIATOR, TRIBUNE, PEOPLE.

TRIB. The priest is about to speak.

FAU. There is no doubt

Of my revenge.

TRIB. Into the arena

The daring Christian will be brought.

Flavian is arrested.

FAU. I would have it so—

I believe in the gods of Rome. They understand

My wishes. *(Enter Gladiator.)*

GLA. Let the lions loose

We shall find each other of one mind.

They are what they seem—let them

Come on. So great an arena,

Romans, pleases the gladiator.

One can fall here stretched at full length.

You have been witness of my glory

And my wounds. My body

Has taken its twenty bites, passing

From tiger to tiger. And now I bring to you again,

After long labors, oh my dear Romans,

Whatever flesh their ferocious teeth

Have left upon my bones. These fifteen years

My nature has not changed: they can

Find on my arms their old

Accustomed food. Let them come, I wait them,

And shall be again triumphant. . . . Because I wish

To live again, once more to see my child.

PRIEST. Heaven commands, and in its name I speak.

The daring Christians have violated

Juno's temple. The gods are wroth.

From star to star a cloud of displeasure

Vells Olympus: and upon us now impends

A tempest of misfortune. In vain

The bodies of the sacrifice are opened,

Or smoking entrails studied

With a fearful look. Juno is deaf
 To the appeal of her priests, and answers not.
 Her profaned altars to the care
 Of Nemesis are left, until the offence
 Be atoned by Christian blood. The games
 Are placed under the shadow of celestial auspices—
 To the people games, and sacrifices to the Gods
 Are given. Between them and Christ, O Romans,
 Rages a mortal strife. Wherefore we immolate
 A Christian now, and thereby propitiate fate.
 Let the gladiator strike, and with that blood,
 The favor of the Gods, now
 By impiety turned aside,
 Will fall again on earth.

PEOPLE.

Death

To the Nazarenes!

GLA.

Romans, I shall obey. The head
 I bow to the decree of the Immortals. They
 Are insulted by the audacious Christian crowd.
 The slave's hand shall avenge
 The holy gods, and I will punish
 The great rebel crime. Still... I must say,
 I like to fight with lions, and would
 Much prefer it.

SCENE IV.

NEODAMIA is brought on by slaves. The GLADIATOR selects his arms

NEOD.

To thee, O Lord,

Thy handmaid brings a docile heart.
 This soil is fruitful when it is watered
 With our blood, and may these last battles
 Cause new germs of faith to spring for every looker on.

GLA.

A woman's voice... This calls
 For all my courage... Ready I was
 Indeed for different work.

What! Neodamia!

Ye gods! And by my hands! Art thou
 Truly Christian?

NEOD.

I am a martyr.

GLA.

And Flavian?

- NEOD. In prison. Now take
My life, and God will take my soul.
- GLA. Romans, once before I refused
To slay this maiden . . . Faustina
Knows it well.
- PRIEST. The people are tired
Of delay.
- GLA. When we wish to speak
The people will listen. Their grace I see.
I know her; she is not a Christian.
- NEOD. I am.
- GLA. My voice drowns thine!
Spare this victim, and for her
Offer up the executioner.
- PRIEST. Let each
Keep his position.
- NEOD. Mine is best
Of all.
- GLA. For ten, for twenty years
In your amphitheatre and against all
Comers, one against all, I swear
To fight, against all—every day—
You only save her—save her.
- FAU. What means
This lengthy talk?
- GLA. By the Gods!
I call upon you, Romans, answer.
- TRIB. In the Circus
She must fall.
- FAU. Give her to the Lions
If the slave persists.
- GLA. No! I shall not give
Such joy to Faustina. Come child,
Come to death.
- NEOD. To life.
- GLA. Bow down!
The blow will be more sure.
- NEOD. (*Kneeling.*) O Lord,
Deign to accept me, and from my bosom
Take every thought that is not divine.
- GLA. This cuts me to the soul. Come now,
Courage my hand—I must remove
This veil. (*Touches her neck.*)

- NEOD. Is there not room
For thy sword?
- GLA. No; I shall hurt thee
Too much.
- NEOD. Pity.
- GLA. I must uncover your shoulders,
Excuse me. (*Removes the veil.*) Oh Heaven.
- FAU. She is beautiful; even
The slave is struck by her.
- GLA. Here, here is a scar—
It is from a weapon, O gods!
- NEOD. Death, death.
- GLA. How willing she is—Where did you get that
Dagger cut on your back—
(*She makes sign of ignorance.*)
Your father's name,
His name? I never knew it.
- NEOD. I never knew it.
- GLA. Never?
- NEOD. No—I was a slave in Egypt;
I have no kindred.
- GLA. Ye gods, ye gods!
- PRIEST. Strike, strike.
- GLA. I strike her—My own daughter.
- NEOD. I.
- FAU. His daughter?
- GLA. Mine—my daughter—Open O earth!
Must I kill my daughter? O Heavens
Fall on me—
- NEOD. My father!
- GLA. Daughter—Stolen
From my love; felicity I have so
Craved, lost—a hundred times
I have claimed you from these mutilated gods,
In palaces destroyed, in the dust
Of temples burned; taken untraced
From thy mother's womb;—and that the
Father's knife—her own father—My treasure!
Oh! people, ye would not have this
Horrid crime completed—This is my daughter!
- PRIEST. A slave has no children.
- GLA. Ha! It is too much!
I am armed with that eternal right
Which thou deniest; I belong to you 'tis true:
My flesh belongs to your tigers,

That is true—but the red hot iron
 In your lictors' hand, has eaten
 Into my face, it has not burned my heart.
 I am her father.

PEOPLE. No! no!

GLA. Is there no father

Here among ye? Daughter, perhaps
 They would hear thee—Ask pardon
 With thy own sweet voice.

NEOD. Heaven!

GLA. Silence! be still!—Pity, pardon, Romans!
 The gods make you ever greater
 Stronger and more happy—They are of marble.
 Now Faustina thou knowest what fate
 Is bound in hers—Thou hast a son.

FAU. (*Rises.*) Silence!

(Fatal Oracle—And thus I miss
 My vengeance—My rival—My son.)
 Your indulgence—Romans. This wretched
 Slave passes his own daughter under
 The fatal steel, and every mother
 Joins me in asking grace.

PRIEST. In vain.

PEOPLE. No! no!

TRIB. You must yield to the tempest.

FAU. Faustina yield?

PRIEST. The sovereign people
 In the Circus reigns sole. New and unexpected
 Faustina is thy clemency; and against her
 Thou hast thyself inflamed me only this day.
 She is devoted to the gods.

GLA. No—Brave people

Triumphant people—Your gods
 Require not my daughter's blood.
 This sentence in your mouths comes
 From the Internals; it is unjust, murderous,
 Frightful—Hear ye!—Once in this
 Arena, sprang roaring
 From the dens a lion on Androcles,
 Androcles had saved the very lion's life
 In the desert. The lion
 Knew him, and licked his feet.
 And you did—what? You saved them both—

Weeping with pity—slaves and lion ;
Both were pardoned—now more cruel
Would you be against a daughter and a father !

NEOD. There is no more hope :

FAU. Call the Lictors !

PRIEST. To stop this death, is the same
As to overthrow our altars, crime for which
This woman ought to fall. Still, while punishing
Her sacrilege, we may yet accordance
Make between the rights of heaven and of nature.
She is thy daughter ? Thus, then, Rome gives
Thee leave to go, and by another hand
She shall be offered up.

FAU. Ye gods !

TRIB. Faustina !

PEOPLE. Let her die !

NEOD. Hast thou not heard ? On all sides
They will have me slain.

GLA. Come down into the arena !
Come down and strike her. Do you want
My blood ? Take it. To carry her off
Let your gladiators come !
Your leopards, whose thirst
You slake with blood, to devour her !
Let them all come—over a father's heart.

(Menaces the people.)

FAU. People, just victim to your anger
Is this woman ; but one day's grace
I will that she shall have. Lictors,
Take her back to prison—
To-morrow she shall die !

PRIEST. Thy word is passed,
Bethink thee on the gods !

FAU. I do.

PRIEST. Faustina, bethink thee
Of the Roman people.

FAU. *(Aside.)* (The coming night
Will favor my intent !)

GLA. My daughter !

FAU. People, till to-morrow !

PEOPLE. To-morrow !

ACT V.

SCENE I.

A prison.—Great bronze doors.—Torchlight.

NEODAMIA in the Martyr's Robe.

NEOD. Alone! alone! This cruel
Kindness should not at least have
Separated child from father. This one day
Given to pity, we could have mingled
Our tears, and even have taken
Share each in others' grief. Oh, mournful
Kindness. Deceitful indulgence!
Flavian! Flavian! Ah, that name
Is blasphemy and makes the hair rise up!
From thee, far from thee,
The Lord gives me a place! O, Flavian—
Oh, my lost love!
My friend, Heaven's
Reward in joy thou would'st have been,
Had'st thou been turned by the spirit's breath.
Yesterday, at thy side, I walked trembling
Under the veil of Hymen,
And the heaving zone,
And had an altar;
Such happiness seldom to the world appears.
The martyr's vestments are less glorious,
But in the change there is prepared
A heavenly crown whose light eternal
Comes from the sanctuary of the Lord.

SCENE II.

FAUSTINA and same.

FAU. Come forth! we must escape.
NEOD. You here?
FAU. Neodamia,
For whom love hath made my cruellest
Enemy; my rival. Hear me!

But a few moments now remain, one hour,
No more. The people murmur,
Full of suspicion, and demand
Your life.

NEO.

And what tie can

Unite Cæsar to me, the daughter of a slave,
In this day of terror? What matters
My life or death to Gordian?

FAU.

From thy mother thou wast an untimely
Birth, and a just heaven to
Punish me made its decree, that for
My son and thee there was one fortune,
And for his life and thine should be
The limit equal. The immortal gods themselves....
Oh, blow most cruel! still fixed
To give me pain, threw into your arms
That only mortal, who held mastery
O'er my heart; they have torn me to pieces,
Turned my heart to ashes, for now
I am reduced to beg, to supplicate you,
On my knees; and of all the pride,
The honor, the incense, wherewith the adored
Of Rome was girt, nothing remains
But these bitter tears, and the rack
Of these maternal terrors: now I am nothing,
Nothing but a mother.—Ah, these words,
Do they not reach your heart?

NEO.

I had no mother.

FAU.

Gods! Follow my steps.

NEO.

No, the anger

Which armed you against her, may arm you
Now against me, so that I may prove unfaithful
To the love of my God, alone, supreme,
The only God I have.

FAU.

And Flavian

Do you not worship?

NEO.

I love him.

FAU.

Well then.

NEO.

I must

Die.

FAU.

Horrid thought! Die!

Thou die! And my son! It cannot be—
Fly, Fly! I myself have Flavian
Released, he is waiting

To carry you off from all the world. He
Desires none but thee. Slave, follow me
Hurry, come. Too well doth Faustina know
The value of thy flight.—'Tis he!

SCENE III.

FLAVIAN and same.

LA. My Neodamia! my joy!

EO. You here?

And did you come again to see me?

To see me thus?

FLA. The people are

In revolt. Let us fly—time presses—

Let my love defend thee.

NEO. Oh, tenderness!

Grievous! terrible!

FLA. Faustina has loosed

Thy chains.

NEO. But I retain them.

Farewell. I remain to die. God commands,

And I have vowed.

FAU. Thou hast vowed!

FLA. Ah, Neodamia,

Grief misleads thee. What God is he,

If his law be such,

That it requires us to abandon

Every joy on earth? Ah, come, come!

NEO. Oh God! and do you conspire together

To my ruin?

FLA. To thy safety.

FAU. He is thy husband.

Dost thou hear? Thy spouse. And Faustina

Now makes fast your union; she who

Erewhile stood between and separated you,

Now binds as by an irrefragable knot.

With her powerful hand. Ah! let this

Fateful prodigy persuade—I believe not in the Deities

But I believe in the infernal oracle.

NEO. My father is in prison.

FAU. He shall

Be released.

NEO. This is too much happiness—

God will pardon me.

FAU. Cover thy martyr's
Vestments with this veil.
NEOD. Quick, quick.
FLA. Now to fly—who comes?

SCENE IV.

TRIBUNE and same.
TRIB. The passage
Is closed by the crowd. They are breaking
Into the prison, their leader
The merciless priest. Do not go
Until the Lictors have dispersed this
Maddened mob.
FLA. In a few instants
My arm shall disperse them.
FAU. For the life
Of this girl, your love is a pledge.
NEOD. Flavian, Flavian!
FLA. Keep calm. My sword
Has never failed.
FAU. Close those gates
Of bronze!
FLA. I return quickly:
Little fear of the sovereign people
Have our Lictors. At the clash of arms
Their power falls. (*Exit Fla. and Trib.*)
FAU. The entrance is closed.
NEOD. He will save me! It is not the
People's fury, 'tis God who summons me!
FAU. No, no! banish fear; if Flavian
Fights, it is for thee; over all the mighty gods,
He would be victor. This moment
Thy marriage is accomplished. Be generous!
Let my son be safe, and at every cost
Thou shalt be happy. (*Crash of falling masonry.*)
NEOD. Do you hear?
FAU. A wall is falling!
NEOD. Great heaven!

SCENE V.

The GLADIATOR springs in from the breach.
GLA. I am here!

NEO. Now I can fly from death,
If I fly with thee!

GLA. Curses!
It is a short-lived joy! From thy face
Strip off that vail. It is useless,
My daughter—useless—my darling child?
Why?

FAU. Our flight is at hand.

GLA. What makes
It safe?

FAU. I myself.

GLA. Too late! Too late!
The prisons are forced, the Lictors'
Eagles have gone down, and
The revolt succeeds everywhere. I, myself saw
The howling torrent of the furious
Populace shrieking
For the Christian victim: the priest
With brutal fury heads them.

FAU. Oh, terror!

GLA. My prison, child, is near to thine;
The grating that permitted light
To fall upon my fetters, I tore out,
And creeping through, I fell—
And found myself face to face
With a tiger; I fought him—this dagger
Killed him—I was almost smothered
In his blood. The hole
Begun in the wall by the beast's
Claws, I enlarged enough
To pass me through;
And in this second cell I find myself.
But what's the use? What can I do,
Save die with thee?

FAU. And my Tribune!

GLA. Dead,
Before me!

FAU. My soldiers, Lictors,
Slaves.

GLA. What good are they with the rabble
Roaring at the doors, and all the passages
In their power?

FAU. But Flavian fights:
He can defend her. Then in
My palace—

- GLA. Thy palace is ashes—
 FAU. Heavens !
 GLA. The revolt reached there !
 The flames went up, I saw them.
 FAU. Ye gods !
 And my son !—Let us run—
 GLA. Thy eyes, O, Faustina,
 Are open now ; the flames of thy palace
 Have lighted up the prison.
 FAU. This door ?
 GLA. Is shut !
 FAU. Shut ? Oh yes ! but this—
 GLA. Tigers and lions,
 For thy games !
 FAU. And this ?
 GLA. Shut too.
 FAU. Oh, vain and impotent gods !
 NEOD. Ah, thou hast driven Jesus away.
 GLA. Daughter, to my heart. No one hast thou who
 Loves thee as I do.
 NEOD. Then it is time to die.
 GLA. 'Tis the only blessing left.
 Oh, daughter, mine, thy slave father's love
 Is nothing worth. It is but an added blight
 To thy young life. Thou art proscribed,
 Not debased.
 NEOD. Thy fetters
 Make thee dearer to my love.
 GLA. So—
 I love thee—and thou ? Happiness I never
 Hoped. The one single joy
 That has come to thy father since the day
 Thy mother died !
 FAU. (*Furiously.*) And these gates
 Of bronze, oh, rage ! Why can they not be opened
 NEOD. She is not a Christian. How she must suffer.
 FAU. What horrid danger waits
 Upon my son ?
 GLA. Thy son, sayest thou ?
 And my daughter ? Hast thou forgotten
 That she is of thy family, and that both
 Have one fate, one life—
 And one death ? What did'st thou

Seek? Useless wickedness,
Thy Cæsar's soul in a poor slave's bosom!

FAU. How bitter
Now is the memory of that offence.

GLA. Ah! look
For an instant with a mother's eye
Upon my daughter—young—beautiful,
Only sixteen!

FAU. Horrible! woe, woe!

GLA. Her martyr vesture lies heavy
On the Emperor. Vile and stained
By his mother's wickedness; on the shoulders
Of thy son the purple will not last
Longer than this black veil—
Cæsar already!—

FAU. Mercy! Every word of thine
Is as a dagger thrust! Mercy!

GLA. Hast thou
Ever shown mercy? No! Cursed
Be Cæsar and the Crown. In my rage
I curse that son
That thou shalt never see; I curse
That son imperial, over whom
Weighs that solemn anathema which
Would be too awful for a slave!
This diadem on my daughter's front
Would be the circlet of death.

NEOD. Nay, a crown
Of light. Oh, cease, my father,
To profane the holy palm prepared
By the Lord for me. Thy cruel words
Will but recoil on thee.

GLA. What import to me?
My days—

NEOD. On me they will recoil.
(*Outside.*) (Death!)

GLA. No more they call the father,
No more the athlete's mighty arm. Now they
Want my soul: to throw my daughter
To the ravenous tigers. Thy garments
Torn to pieces, will be steeped in blood;
And ere thou shalt taste death,
Thou wilt have passed through infamy.

NEOD. Oh, God! Death—

Death first! Thou wilt not see it—

GLA. No, no!

I love thee too much. Thou shalt see a proof—

Virginius did it once! My courage,

Perhaps, is less than his. What greater

Proof of love—my heart is torn

With rage. Oh, daughter, mine, keep calm,

Utter no cry of horror; let not a word

Of grief escape, nor move an eye

Nor lip, lest I should hear; ah, nothing—

Nothing for pity's sake, my very heart is closed,

(Cry without.) (Death to Cæsar.)

FAU. To Cæsar!

GLA. Faustina.

Death to Cæsar? Dost thou hear?

FAU. My son.

GLA. The people want him! For once

They are just. Dost thou hear

And not turn pale? The oracle foreknew;

It is going to be fulfilled.

NEOD. Hide me

In thy arms, my father.

GLA. My love is frightened!

NEOD. Will they drag me thence?

GLA. Yes; but not alive. Oh, excess
Of tenderness.—Oh fury. Ever art thou
The gladiator's refuge—thou only—and always
A despairing fury.

NEOD. Will they come to
Disgrace thy daughter? God will not have me
Then in his family. Is that so, my father?

GLA. If God protects thee, let him take my place

And save thee. A miracle. *(Kneels.)*

(Cries without.) (To the lions—

The Sacreligious.)

GLA. Arise! I alone

Defend thee, I alone. I cannot strike—

Don't look at me.

FAUD. They come. I hear

Their footsteps. What to do?

NEO. Save me, my father.

GLA. Save thee from what?

- NEOD. From their vengeance--
This is pity. In face of dishonor
Death is not seen.
- GLA. Then God
Leaves me judge of thy fate.
- NEOD. Ah, my father!
- GLA. Here, thou art his image.
So—so—
I have my steel. Fear not, thou canst not
Be torn from my heart.
- NEOD. Forgive,
Forgive him, Oh, my God!
- GLA. (*Dagger in hand.*) My daughter, embrace me!
- FAU. See, see.—Is nope quite gone?—Heaven,
What dost thou?
- GLA. Thus killing my daughter, I prove
Myself her father. Let her be free. (*Strikes her.*)
- FAU. Celestial gods.
- NEOD. I die.
- FAU. Thy own daughter?
- GLA. And thine.—Let the
People come, and take her. (*Doors broken open.*)

LAST SCENE.

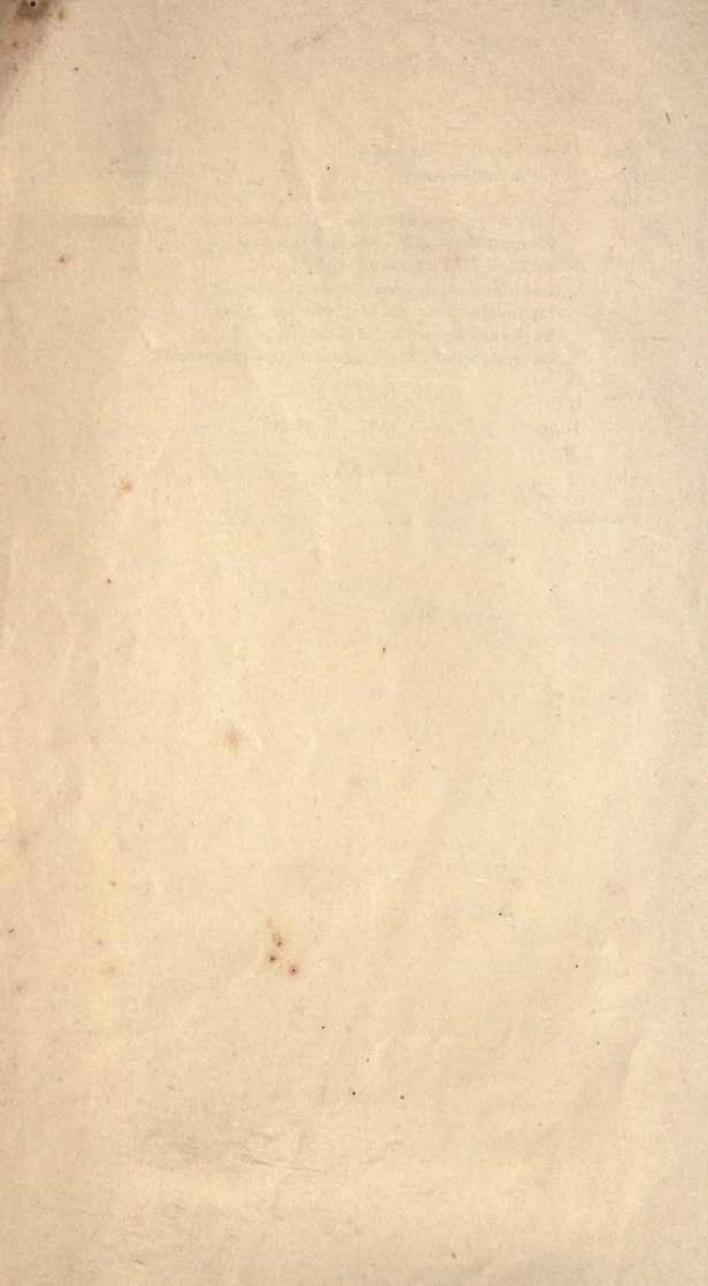
FLAVIAN, People.

- FAU. Flavian;
Cæsar, my son?
- FLA. Dead, before
This door—wounded—covered with blood!
- FAU. Dead?
- FLA. Thy daughter?
- GLA. Dead!
Yes, by my hand; oh, vile, infamous rabble!
- PEOPLE. The Gladiator!
- FAU. My son!
- FLA. Neodamia!
- NEOD. (*Opens her eyes.*)
Ah, thy hand upon my heart. Thou art—
I see thee really? Reunited by
God Himself.
- FLA. And with thee I adore Him.

NEO. One only God—thy soul— (*Dies.*)
 FLA. She is dead—ye gods! (*Kneels.*)

GLA. I offer up her blood,
 Her martyrdom, and my own martyrdom, to the
 Poor and naked god. And may this steel
 Recall to mind what atrocious crime
 Has frightened these our times; and flashing
 Lightnings in the eyes of tyrants, may it say
 To the new age—"Ended is the reign
 Of brutal force! There is no slave in all the world!"

THE END.





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